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(KENNEDY)

WASHINGTON--PRESIDENT KENNEDY SAID TONIGHT HE CONSIDERS GENERAL CABINET MEETINGS TO BE "A WASTE OF TIME" AND THAT HE PREFERS TO MEET WITH HIS DEPARTMENT HEADS INDIVIDUALLY OR IN SMALL GROUPS.

THE PRESIDENT SAID THE SAME IS TRUE TO A LESSER DEGREE FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

KENNEDY, WHO EMPHASIZED HE WAS NOT DOWNGRADING THE CABINET AS AN INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT, DISCUSSED THE QUESTION IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW (NBC-JFK-NO. 2).

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESCRIBED THE DUTIES OF HIS VARIOUS ASSISTANTS AS THEIR PICTURES WERE SHOWN. HE SAID HE TRIES TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH HIS TOP AIDES INDIVIDUALLY. THIS IS BETTER THAN HAVING A CHIEF OF STAFF, HE SAID, BECAUSE IT PROVIDES "MUCH GREATER INTIMACY WITH THE VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WE HAVE."

THE PRESIDENT SAID HE CONSIDERS ONE OF HIS FUNCTIONS TO BE "TO TRY TO GATHER TOGETHER AS MANY ABLE PEOPLE AS CAN BE GATHERED AND THEN TO CONSTANTLY STIMULATE THEM TO ACTION AND USE THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THAT PURPOSE."

KENNEDY SAID TWO TOP ASSISTANTS--ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR. AND RICHARD GOODWIN--HAVE BEEN GIVEN MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS WITH RESPECT TO U.S. RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA BECAUSE THAT AREA "IS IN A MOST CRITICAL PERIOD IN ITS RELATIONS WITH US."

"THEREFORE, IF WE DON'T MOVE NOW," HE SAID, "MR. CASTRO MAY BECOME A GREATER DANGER THAN HE IS TODAY."

NEWSMEN ASKED WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY PIERRE SALINGER TO EXPLAIN THE LATTER REMARK. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT SIMPLY MEANT THE UNITED STATES MUST MOVE IN LATIN AMERICA. HE SAID THERE WAS NO REFERENCE TO MOVING IN CUBA.

COMMENTATOR RAY SCHERER, WHO CONDUCTED THE TV INTERVIEW OBSERVED THAT KENNEDY DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE AS MANY CABINET MEETINGS AS OTHER PRESIDENTS. HE ASKED IF KENNEDY FOUND A CABINET UNWIELDY.

THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD HELD ONLY TWO CABINET MEETINGS SINCE HIS INAUGURATION JAN. 20, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THIS "IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS PRESIDENTS."

"BUT THE REASON IS THAT ALL THESE PROBLEMS CABINET OFFICERS DEAL WITH ARE VERY SPECIALIZED," HE SAID. "I SEE ALL THE CABINET OFFICERS EVERY WEEK...BUT WE DO NOT HAVE THESE GENERAL CABINET MEETINGS WHICH I REALLY